

## Life of Hiding

# End of a Top Spy

By Peter Wilms  
Toronto Star

LEAD

"FACELESS" former Nazi general who has led the West's spy network in Europe for 20 years retires next year to a life of hiding. The general, Reinhard Gehlen, will have a double guard day and night for the rest of his life.

Gehlen is a man with a price on his head. East Germany, alone, has offered \$250,000 for him dead or alive. Gehlen made his home in the United States near the end of the war. He traded his own safety for Russian secrets.

He became the man without a face — the chief of a vast West German spy network with headquarters behind a high electrified fence in Munich's Pullach Forest. He was last photographed just after the war and was a man whom virtually nobody knew.

★ ★ ★

GEHLEN JOINED the West in an astonishing way. The door of an American patrol's chalet opened to reveal a gaunt, scruffy German with large, protruding ears.

He held under his arm a large bundle of papers. "I am General Reinhard Gehlen," he told the patrol leader.

But the American was not interested. With the war in Europe all but over, generals were not worth a pinch of salt. The allies were after the bigger fish — Himmler's security men and S.S. Black Guards.

Still, Gehlen insisted on his right to be heard. He said, he said, documents in which the Americans would be very interested. Finally, he was deposited with an intelligence officer.

★ ★ ★

HE SHOWED the officer the documents, and the American gasped, for they contained a run down on Russian strength — plans and weapons it would have taken the United States years to compile.

Gehlen was rushed to Washington, where he made a deal which ensured his own personal salvation from war prosecution and at the same time struck fear and hatred into the Communist bloc.

Now, after more than 20 years as the anchor-man for American intelligence in Europe, he is retiring. But he cannot be forgotten. During the war he ran a highly secret department known as Foreign Armies-East.

He was a trusted confidant of Hitler, until he told Hitler that it would be futile to attack Russia, whose strength he had accurately assessed from his agents in the area.

HITLER, with pompous disregard for the realities of the situation, declared: "This is the biggest bluff pulled since the days of Genghis Khan. Who is responsible for this appalling rubbish?"

It was Gehlen who was responsible, and Gehlen was right. At least it might have protracted Hitler's war and given him a chance to recoup his massive losses on other fronts.

But the Fuehrer went his way and General Gehlen went his — straight to the Americans. Having handed over his documents and revealed the position as it was, Gehlen made three demands:

- The staff of his unit should be directly under his orders; they should work as a purely German organization on a fixed budget financed by the Americans.

- Until Germany regained her sovereignty and formed a government of her own, he, Gehlen, should be regarded as a trustee of



GEHLEN IN NAZI UNIFORM

Last photograph of mysterious general

German interests in intelligence matters. And he should be free to pass his organization over to the German government after Germany had regained sovereignty.

★ ★ ★

THE AMERICANS accepted the lot. They could not afford to let this prize slip. The last of his conditions was achieved in 1955, when the network fell under the jurisdiction of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Adenauer was a friend and defended Gehlen through many crises.

The United States provided the master spy with a fixed budget of more than \$2.8 million a year and provided for him, his staff and their families a special compound from which they could operate in secret.

Now he was able not only to provide the Americans with the information they wanted, but to make them feel it was essential to recreate the German army to help in the defense of Europe against the Russians. His information convinced the United States that Germany should be re-armed, and, significantly, on Gehlen's recommendation his old chief, Lieutenant General Adolf Heusinger, was appointed first Inspector General of the new West German army.

★ ★ ★

DURING his period as chief European spy for the West, Gehlen has been criticized often for making too much use of Himmler's S.S. men. He countered in an interview in 1963 with the Munich weekly, *Review* — the first he had given since taking his post — by saying that the Americans liked to have S.S. men.

Be that as it may, Gehlen succeeded in developing a spy network, said to employ more than 5000 agents, which is the envy of the West and the target of the East.

With a bit of luck he should die peacefully, unlike many of his contemporaries. But there will still be no photographs.

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3828  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2001 2005

100% AVAILABLE COPY  
BEST AVAILABLE COPY